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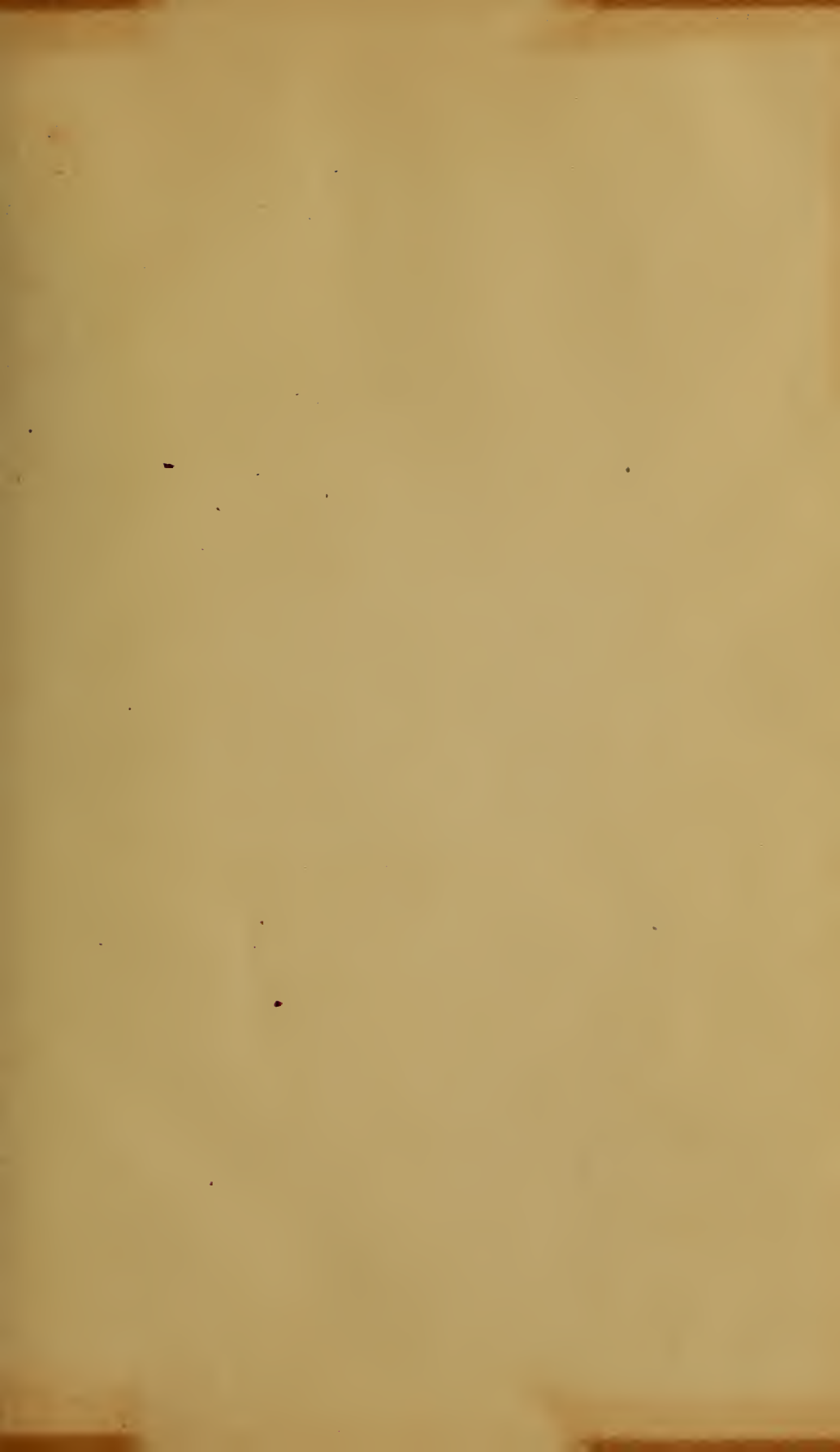
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BUSINESS AND DIVERSION

* * * * *
* * * * * DISCOURSE

... AT ...

AMMAUSKEEG-FALLS

... BY ...

☉ REV. JOSEPH SECOMBE

◊◊ †◊◊ †◊◊ ◊◊ †◊◊

FISHING SEASON
1739

REPRINT, 1892.

Historical Sketch of the Sermon.

The first printed sermon preached within the limits of what is now Manchester, N. H., was at "Ammuskeeg-Falls, in the Fishing Season, 1739," by Rev. Joseph Secombe, of Kingston, N. H., a gentleman of good attainments, eccentric habits, and extremely fond of fishing. It was his custom annually, with other gentlemen, to visit the Falls for recreation and diversion. At such times he preached on Sunday to the natives and others settlers and visitors. One of his sermons was printed in Boston in 1743, and dedicated to the "Honourable Theodore Atkinson, Esq.," of Portsmouth, N. H., who was one of his hearers. Copies of the printed discourse have become very scarce, only five perfect ones being known to exist. It has been thought advisable to reprint the same that it may be preserved; hence seventy-five copies have been put into covers for circulation in libraries and among friends to preserve it from oblivion. With the exception of the modern *s* for the former long *f*, the same appears *verbatim, literatim, et punctatim*. The quotation on its title-page contains the name "Moniack," of which Potter's "History of Manchester," says:

"Moniack, one of the names applied to the Merrimack by the Indians, from the fact that it contained a great many islands. The literal meaning of Moniack is 'Island-place' — it being a compound word from the Indian nouns *Mona* (island) and *Auke* (place)," (p. 721).

"*Namaoskeag*, or as called by the English, and now written, *Amoskeag*, has been a noted place for centuries. The terminals *oog*, *ook*, and *uk*, written by the English *auke*, or *ook*, were used by the Indians to represent a *place* or *spot* of land or water; and *eag*, *eeg*, and *eek*, written by the English *eag*, *eke*, and *ic*, were the terminals used by the Indians, to represent *long* or *extended* places of water. Thus *Namaos* means a *fish*, and compounded with *eag*, with the *k* thrown in for the sake of sound, becomes the Indian derivative noun, *Namaoskeag*, a *long* and *continued place of water for fish*, and was doubtless applied by the Indians to that part of the Merrimack river consisting of *falls*, *rapids*, and *ripples*, extending from the Skowhegan in Merrimack, to Turkey Falls in Concord. . . . But as the country became settled, and fish scarce, the '*Namaoskeag*' became limited to the rapids in the immediate vicinity of '*Namoaskeag*' falls, (pp. 638-639.)"

The word has many variations in orthography, among them being, *Namoaskeag*, *Naamkeake*, *Namaske*, *Naumkeag*, *Naimkeak*, and several others. (See Potter's "*Farmers' Monthly Visitor*, 1852-1853.)

inoffensive to GOD, and necessary for the Comfort and Support of human Society.

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A

utter'd in Part

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IN THE

Fishing-Season.

by Joseph
Secomb.

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Deep in the Vale old Monack rolls his Tides,
Romantick Prospects crown his reverend Sides ;
And thro' wild Grotts, and pendent Woods he strays,
And ravish'd at the Sight, his Course delays.
Silent and calm—now with impetuous shock
Pours his swift Torrent down upon the steepy Rock ;
The tumbling Waves thro airy Channels flow,
And loudly roaring, smoke and foam below. *I. W.*

XX

BOSTON, Printed for S. KNEELAND and T. GREEN in Queen-Street.
MDCCXLIII.

To the Honorable
Theodore Atkinson, Esq;

AND OTHERS

The Worthy Patrons of the Fishing

AT

AMMAUSKEEG.

Gentlemen,

It's not to signify to others that I pretend to an Intimacy with you or that I ever had a Share in those pleasant Diversions, which you have innocently indulged yourselves in, at the Place where I have taken an annual Tour for some Years past. Yet I doubt not that you'll Patronize my Intention, which is to sence against Bigottry and Superstition. All Excess I disclaim, but pretend to be a Favourer of Religion, and of Labour as an Ingredient, and of Recreation as a necessary Attendant.

I believe the *Gentlemen* who moved me to preach there in some odd Circumstances, and those at whose Desire and Charge this Discourse is Printed, (asking their Pardon if my Suggestion appear to them ungrounded) were moved more from the uncommonness of the Thing, than any Thing singular in it. I have put off the Importunity for near these three years; but least it should be, that I fear, it's being seen by the World, I submit it to sight and Censure.

So little as I know you, *Gentlemen*, I heartily present it to you; tho' all the Reason that I intend to offer is, we have fished upon the same Banks: And tho' I know this will be no Bait, I am fond of being esteemed, in the Affairs of Fishing,

Gentlemen,

your most Obedient

and very humble Servant.

Fluviatulis Piscator.




Business and Diversion

inoffensive to G O D.

J O H N XXI. iii.

“ Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a Fishing.”

 'Tis an odd and vicious Conceit of the Superstitious, who in Popish Countries are called the Religious; that a solitary Sequestration from the social Affairs and Duties of Life, afford a mighty Advantage to Religion; For this is contrary to the Design of the Creator in the Make and Constitution of Man; opposite to the Providence and Precepts of God and the Examples of holy Men recorded in sacred History. The Instance in our Text shows that *Business*, * or I think Diversion in proper Portions of Time, and other suitable Circumstances, are not hurtful, but very friendly to Religion.

The Apostles were constituted Fishers of Men, to allure and draw Souls to Christ, from a Pit of Sin and Misery, to an Ocean of Piety

** For their stated Business, was to preach the Gospel; tho' Fishing had been their Employment.*

and Pleasure. . . . An high and really religious Employment ! And our Lord gave them a *Vacancy*, with Restriction, *but tarry ye at Jerusalem*. They had been commissioned long before, [Matth. x. 17 and Luke ix.] but before they were to enter upon their Enterprize, in which he should be coporally absent, they have a Leisure refreshing Season. To what should they in Reason have devoted this Intermission, but Fasting and Mourning, for now the Bridegroom was not always with them ? Why, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken, than the Fat of Rams*, 1 Sam. xv. 22. He who best knew the Nature of Man, before he was to send Men upon extraordinary Business, would give them Leisure ; nor was this Space confined wholly to Devotion. Some of it, we find, was spent in Business or Diversion. Certainly these Saints were as sincerely and piously affected to God, as the superstitious Biggots to Popery can, with any Shew of Modesty, pretend to be ; yet they divert themselves in so suitable a Season, and our Lord not only appoints the Leisure, but supports them in it ; by giving them a lucky Draught of Fishes. This sacred Story leads me to think,

I. In the general, that the common Enterprizes of Life are not inconsistent with Piety towards God : But that infinite Holiness may be pleased with them. And in particular, that

II. Fishing is innocent as Business or Diversion.

Some think it strange that I give myself the Trouble to illustrate these Things, which, to them appear level to the lowest Capacity.

But all Men are not of the same Cast or constitution. A Proposition which is easy and evident to one, may be as doubtful and difficult to another ; and its no uncommon Case, for Men who have no higher End in their Employments, and have been unseasonable, unguarded and irregular in their Diversions, and have no higher End than Self, if they are convinced of their Idolatry and Carnality, to exclaim against the world ! Then, when they most of all need to be diligent in some good Employment, Diligence is termed Worldly-mindedness ; seasonably and temperately to recreate themselves, is carnal Pleasure. These Difficulties require no great depth of Tho't, nor a Multitude of Words for their Solution.

We may in an easy and natural Manner, consider that Religion is all of a Piece, and one Duty does not destroy another. That Business and Diversion, in their proper Place and Time, determined from a good Principle, and performed piously and prudently ; are so far from being offensive, that they are a necessary Branch of our holy Religion.

Let us then in the general consider, *Whether the common Enterprizes of human Life, be consistent with practical Piety.*

Here we must tell what we mean, by the common Enterprizes of

Life. And we renounce all unjust and dishonest Methods of obtaining the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of the World : And all unlawful Games, and those which are lawful, when they are unsuitably and irregularly managed.

We consider Business or Diversions, as human Understandings. By Business, we mean our stated Exercises, or that which we ought to employ most of our Time in, and most of our Thoughts about. Diversion is the turning aside from Business, in some proper Period, to refresh ourselves, and fit us for a more cheerful and lively Discharge of Duty. Now, if it should be made evident, that these are Parts of our Duty to God, I suppose they must be consistent with real Religion. And this will appear, if we consider, That God is an active Being, and proposes himself as our Pattern. It's not only contrary to Scripture, and deep thinking, but common Sense, to suppose the great Creator and Governour of all Worlds, idle and inactive. Every one conceives something of his Operation, as the Over-ruler of Human Affairs, or Author of all Things. And if God be Agent, he expects those to be such who are capable of acting : And as he is perfect, and must act in a most excellent Manner, according to his own Nature, he must expect and require his Creatures to act according to the Power with which he has endowed them. And as he has endowed Man with a Capacity of knowing something of him, he must design his imitating of him in his Measure and Degree. In this the Image of God in Man consists. And we are to imitate him in Labour and Rest, as well as in other Respects. This will be clear to you, if you recollect the Fourth Commandment : *Six Days shalt thou Labour*, for in six *the Lord made* and *rested* on the seventh, &c.

Indeed, no Man was made for Time, but Time for him : And as God uses Eternity for his own Glory, according to his infinite Wisdom and Power ; so he expects Man should spend his Time, according to his Capacity

Man's Capacity is the Measure of his Duty, and the Nature of Man requires Rest and Labour, and a prudent Interchange and Succession of each. We were not obliged to do, in our Original, those Things which our Species were not capable of performing : But the Limitation of Nature was a Bound by the Deity, *So far shalt thou come, and no farther*. 'The Stretch of a human Mind, and the Strength of Man's Body, is limited by the supream Disposer of all Things. And the same *Being*, in limiting our Capacity, makes out our Duty, by our Make and Frame, and casual Circumstances in the Course of his Divine Providence, he shews a wise Man what he ought to do, and what to avoid, and how he should direct, guide, and govern himself or others, No mere Man ever could, nor will any Man that has the Government of himself, pretend to keep up an uninterrupted Series of idleness and

Indolence, of Labour or Devotion ; for Experience must soon convince them that Man's Nature is formed for Variety: He is a changeable Creature, and is supported by Change. So Man at first was put into the Garden of Pleasure, not only to serve his Maker, in his Devotions, and delight himself by his Sensations, but *to dress it and to keep it* : For in his primitive *Make* he needed those Changes. And we need them much more in our lapsed State : As all the Works of God, in Nature and Revelation, manifestly declare. Let those who would form to their Imagination, a beautiful Description of the Original of the World, read Dr. *Burnet* : But I must confine myself to Scripture, and the common Current or our Experience, in the present State of Things ; and as to that original State of the World, you will excuse me if I say little about it, because we have little to do with it. But if we gaze upon Nature, in it's present Situation, we shall find, that every Thing calls for a prudent Alloy of Labour and Diversion : [Tho' I must rejoin, because I would not be wanting in Caution, by Labour, I would be understood to mean, our Actions in our particular Callings ; and by our Diversions, our turning aside from them, whether in the prescribed scriptural or rational Acknowledgements of the Deity, or our innocent unbending the Bow in those lawful Amusements, which are more commonly called Diversions. The Reason of my thus speaking is on the Account of the *divine Diversion*. *Six Days shalt thou Labour. But on the Seventh* God who best knew our Capacities, has delineated our Buisness [or that which we are Statedly to employ most of our Time in, for that I call, must call so]. *God* confirms the Division both by Precept and Example : And if we throw off Superstition and allow ourselves to think freely we shall be confirmed that Business is Part of our Religion.] To return then : Let us consider the Universe in its present State and Situation. All the heavenly Bodies keep their Course, [but their Orbits are more or less Excentric]. The rising SUN calls Man forth to his Business. The *Sun* withdraws, and lengthning Shades forewarn us of the rising Damp, and unhealthy Vapour ; and bid us retire for Rest and Shelter. Yet if something uncommon calls us longer abroad, the *Moon* and *Stars* will lend a little of their *borrowed* Light ; but amphibious Creatures, Birds and Beasts of Prey, oft check our Improvidence or Negligence. The Sun gives us our longest Days when the Earth requires most of our Labour, and when she refuses Produce, he shortens our Hours of Business.

So the vast Collection of Waters sometimes heaves in its briny Billow, swells every Bay, and rushes with Joy tho' every Channel ; as from an Engine played by the Almighty Arm ; then sinks into her deep Caverns, leaves Room for the Return of the rapid Rivers ; with vast Additions from in-land Oceans.

The Winds also take their turns for Labour and Rest. The labori-

ous East sends gently in the vast Magazines of floating Wealth, to the favorite Sons of Fortune ; while he is gathering up the scattering Clouds, which he shoves in upon the craving Land, and generously pours down a more universal Blessing : and retires, when the brisk West opens a Glene, scatters the broken Cloud, and sweeps up the redundant Moisture. * * *

So the Earth *here* raises a rocky Mountain with a frowning Front ; and levels *there* a pleasant Plain ; *here* sinks a rushy Fen, *there* raises a fertile Field : *Here* the struggling Streams rush down a rapid River, *there* the easy Waters lye still and move not But what in Nature does not ? Every Thing calls for Labour, and Labour requires rest.

These uncultivated Lauds call for hard Labour, but some other Circumstances admit of Diversion ; for this the half-tam'd *Deer* graze your Plains, and the rough *Bear* infest domestick Folds. The ingenious Dr. *Woodward* has shown what convulsions there were at the Time of the Deluge, and how Sterile the Earth is made by that awful Event ; and this to make us Labour, because our sinful Propensity required it.*

But we are social Creatures ; and the Cord of Society is strengthened by Industry. In this defective State, great Diligence is necessary in Education, in Purging out Prejudices, Infusing Principles and Maxims of Wisdom ; and acquiring Habits of just Reasoning, and Prudent Determining in every Occurrence. It's needful that some should make a business of Teaching ; and the Labour of others must support such in their Labour.

Government is necessary to our good Order ; to secure our Lives, Property and Peace : And those who are by divine Providence, set in Authority over us, should be esteemed and honoured ; that they may be so, they should be set above Contempt, by a generous Sup-

* Speaking of the old World, he says that after the Fall of Man, "These exuberant Productions of the Earth became a continual Decay and Snare to him, they only excited and fomented his Lusts, and ministered Fuel to his Vices and Luxury, and the Earth requiring little or no Tillage, there was little Occasion for Labour, so that almost the whole Time lay upon his hand, and gave him Leisure to contrive ; and full Swing to persue his Follies ; and the Pravity of humane Nature was The Pravity of humane Nature is not, I fear, less yet than it was then And to remove the Temptation and Cause of the Sin, he brought this Change, by mingling and confounding its first constituent Principles That by this Means a great Part of their Time might be taken up, &c.

See his natural History, Ed. 1st. Pag. 89, to 114

port from the Society whom they serve : which it never can do unless Industrious.

Seeing we are to consider GOD, not only as Creator of Man, but as the Founder of Society, and it must follow that a social Homage is his Due ; and this Homage must be paid in the best, the most regular and rational manner : It appears by the Light of Nature, and Suffrage of all Nations, that there should be some Persons stated and appointed to lead Societies in their Devotions ; to keep the Knowledge of God, and our Duty to him, clear from all Confusions and unworthy Conceptions, and to excite religious Sentiments, &c. This requires the Labour and Study of such Persons, and the Labour of others to support them. So that unless we would have Ignorance and Irreligion, and all Manner of Miseries and Mischiefs infest Mankind, we must labour : and as God is the Author of the Species, and Founder of our State, this Industry should be practised with a View to his Glory, as Part of our holy Religion.

This Thought includes Piety, Justice and Charity. We must be diligent in some lawful Calling, because God requires it, as mere Reason shews, so doth the Scriptures.

Those who will take no Method for their own Support, rob Society, or murder themselves. If a Man provide not for himself he either starves or pillages his Neighbour : I can call it nothing less than Robbery, if he could by any lawful Business, have supported himself ; for he is as really a Villain, who, without my knowing it, picks my Pocket, as he who says, *Stand and Deliver!* And whatever I am obliged by Authority to pay towards the Support of Religion, Government, and the Poor, more than I should or ought to have done, if my Neighbour had been industrious, they really rob me of ; for I have so much less of Estate thro' their Negligence The Equity of that Precept is clear, *He that will not work, neither let him eat.* And it's as evidently just, he that will not labour to support Government, forfeits it's Protection and Favour.

The Man who will not labour, often thinks himself forced to lie long in this Neighbor's Debt ; which is a great Piece of Injustice to his Neighbour and to Society : Seeing if his industrious Neighbour had his Money in his Hand, he would have turn'd it to the Increase of his Estate, and Emolument of the Community. It's thro' Idleness that Men have little to dispose of, and are tempted to ask such exorbitant Prices for their Wares.

The Original of Communities, are Families. In these are weak and feeble Members, who need Labour for their Support : And that Man

is not only unjust, but barbarous and cruel, who neglects them.*
*He that provideth not for his own, especially for those of his own House,
 hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.*

We ought to labour from a Principle of Charity, *That we may have
 to give to him that needeth.*† *The Poor ye have with you always.*‡
 If the Poor perish thro' your Want, when you might have had it to
 give ; it's as much thro' your Neglect, as if you had it, and refused to
 help and relieve them.

Indeed the most kind and prudent Way of relieving the Poor, is by
 setting them to work, if they are able. For hereby you give them
 Courage, cause them to be prudent and frugal ; and prevent much Sin.
 It does not put them to so much Pain, to ask for that for which they
 have laboured : And what they earn hardly, they will not be so likely
 to spend idly. While they have Employ, they may be kept from mak-
 ing Mischief among Neighbors, from *wandering about from House to
 House as Busy-Bodies.*§

*If ye shall fulfill the royal Law, according to the Scriptures thou
 shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, ye shall do well. If a Brother or a
 Sister be naked, or destitute of daily Food, and one of you say to them,
 Depart in Peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding you give them
 not of those things that are needful to the Body. What doth it ? But can
 common Christians feed their Neighbours with anything better than
 fair Words unless they be diligent in their Business.*

* There has been long and tedious Disputes about a Medium
 of Trade, and a sad Complaint about the constant Falling of
 Money : While the Prices of the Produce of the Country are un-
 der no Regulation by Law : Every one almost will make it a
 Rule, *to sell as dear as he can* : And if they ask an *Angel* this
 Year, for that which might have been purchased with a *Crown*
 last, an *Angel* is worth no more now than a *Crown* was then ;
 and Money must continue Falling. It's worthy the Tho't of con-
 siderate Man, whether a want of Labourers be not at the Bottom
 of all this. If Men don't labour, they vainly complain of hard
 Times, and Scarcity of Money ; for they have nothing to procure it.

† Eph. iv. 28. ‡ Matth. xxvi. 11.

§ In the best regulated Communities, they keep all employ'd
 young and old, strong and weak ; those who are strong to more
 onerous Service, and the more feeble to that which is less bur-
 thensome, &c. See Sir WILL. TEMPLE of Holland and BUSBEG ;
Fuci Epist. RICHELIEU's *Pol. Will.* Chap. IX. Sect. vi.

Quest. *These are evident, you may say, but how do they reach the Rich?*

The Rich are of the same Nature as the Poor, and stand in as near Relation to God and Society as they : And in these Respects, have as much need of Business. Tho' Men have ever so much Wealth, they should consider that Idleness and Inactivity rusts and depraves the Mind, and renders it unfit for the Service of God or Men. It either distempers the Brain with Melancholly, or fills the Body with ill Humours, and the Mind with vicious Inclinations ; and either of them give Satan great advantage against us. Besides we are to consider Wealth as a Talent given us by God to improve, therefore the more any Man has, the more he has to turn to advantage, which must proportionably encrease Care and enlarge the Sphere of Action. He that sinks his Estate thro' Indolence robs the Publick, for he cant do so much for the Commonwealth. And if he only keeps the Principal, and endeavours to make no Interest, he is an *unprofitable Servant* to God who intrusts him, and to the Society who protects him.

If we are to be Followers of God as dear Children ;
Reflection. if God is an Agent ; if we are to imitate him in labouring six P.rts in seven of our Time ; if the human Constitution in its Original requires Change of Labour and Rest ; if this is the State of all Nature ; if Piety to God, and Justice and Charity to Men require Labour ; and Business cannot be perform'd to Advantage without some seasonable prudent and regular Diversion : How wild and superstitious are those who would drive Persons into Monasteries and Nunneries, under the Notion of their spending their whole Time in Devotion ? And how much better is it for Persons who are deeply in Debt, or dependent on Charity for their daily Support, to run about under the Notion of dealing with their Neighbours in some pretended Case of Conscience, prating about Things *which they understand not* ; then study to be quiet and *do their own Business !*

Extraordinary Religion is the most exact Transcript of the communicable Attributes of God ; and the nearest Imitation of the divine Being, as far as the Dictates and Limits of Nature, and the Rules of his holy Word. They who are wise above what is written, will soon discover their Folly : For when Superstition has overwhelmed a Man's Brain, like a Child with the Rickets, his Head grows too big for his Body, and the distempered Creature soon dwindles away to nothing. For men in vain plead for such Devotion as robs Society, such as defrauds Mankind. *He that loves not his Brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen.*

Weak Persons are apt to say, Can we do too much for God ? Can we spend too much Time in Religion ? No, you cannot. But you may disobey God, when you think you obey him. You may do what

he forbids, when you think you do what he requires. You may be idolatrous, when you think you are mighty devout. Why, your Ancestors tho't this might be ; Why else did they reject the exorbitant Number of popish Fast and Festivals, &c. ? In one Century you seem to have forgot your Errand to *America*. And what do you think of those *Israelites*, who sacrificed their Children, &c. Do you think that they could do too much for God ? Could they do any more than to give their First-born of their Bodies for the Sin of their Souls ? Who could blame them, if none can do too much [in the common Sense] ? If a Man were to murder his Father or Mother, his Wife or Children, or himself, under the Notion of being extraordinary religious, and should say, who can do too much for God, would you not think the poor Creature were delirious ? Why, *He that loves not his brother is a Murderer* ! Many make a great Talk of Matters of Faith, or rather of Opinion, and will go prating from Place to Place,* and take little or no Care of their Families ; they are mighty religious, but if it were possible they would not pay a Farthing for the Support of the Government, (by which our Lives are preserved) or of Religion, or for the Education of their Children. They like Holidays extreamly, and might be glad if every Day were such ; but can, with a good Conscience, lie in Debt from Year to Year. It's an easy Matter to pray, and read, and talk devoutly ; but to work is hard, 'tis tedious to the poor Carcass, a Weariness to the Flesh ! It's an easy Matter to run down your industrious Neighbour as a worldly Man, but have you paid him that which you owed him ? Is not he forced, in great Part, to support your Family ?

I wish Men would know what Religion is in the Whole, and not set the several Parts of it at Variance, and make one Branch militate with another. *Let us love God with all our Hearts*, and at the same Time remember that we are to *love our Neighbour as ourselves*.

Let us meditate on and long after Heaven ; but know at the same Time, that our Way thither is thro' the Earth : That the Soul is infinitely the superior Part, but if we murder the Body, the Soul must eternally be damned. Let us be frequent at Church, yet not forget that we have something to do at Home. Let's be serious and steady

* I wish there were not too much Reason for Complaint in this Regard, at this Day. I have often been surprized, not only at the prophane Railing against Lectures, but at the Absurdity and Folly of many, who had hardly a Morsel of Meat to put into their Mouths, and their Children near famishing, and all their Business ruining, on Account of their violent and furious rambling here and there, on the Notion of some religious Errand ; as if God would call them to a Fraud and Barbarity, which, the Apostle tells us, is worse than Infidelity, *I Tim. 5, 8*.

in our Devotions, and likewise diligently follow our Business. In short, Let every Command have its proper Weight with us, every Duty it's Proportion of our Time and Tho'ts.

Business and Diversion, in the general, may be allowed as innocent and necessary. But some Enterprizes which wear that Name may be scrupled. We may therefore enquire in particular,

II. *Whether Fishing is lawful as Business or Diversion.*

Not only those called Religious, among the *Turks* and *Persians*, and the *Benjans*, &c. have scrupled eating of Flesh or Fish, but some among ourselves, fear whether we ought to take away the Lives of Creatures for our own Support ; and are positive that we should not for Diversion. Many have a great Aversion to those whose Trade it is to take away the Lives of the lower Species of Creatures. A Butcher is (in their Apprehension) a mere Monster, and a Fisherman, a filthy Wretch.

It's an ancient Observation, that a *merciful Man is merciful to his Beast*. *The righteous Man regards the Life of his Beast*, Prov. xii. 10. Where any have long used any Creature, the Tho't of it's Service, and some sort of Regard contracted to it thereby, is not easily conquered. But a noble generous Soul hates Barbarity to foreign as well as domestick Creatures.

"It's not certain [says my Lord BEA'CON] that the worthier any Soul is, the larger is it's Compassion. For contracted degenerate Minds imagine that those Things belong not to them : But the Mind that looks upon itself as a nobler Portion of the Universe, is kindly affected towards inferiour Creatures"

He that takes Pleasure in the Pains and dying Agonies of the lower Species of Creatures, is either a stupid sordid Soul, or a Murderer in Heart. He that delighteth to see a Brute die, would soon take great Pleasure in the Death of a Man.

But here, in *Fishing*, we are so far from delighting to see our Fellow-Creature die, that we hardly think whether they live. We have no more of a murderous Tho't in taking them, than in cutting up a Mess of Herbage. We are taking something, which God, the Creator and Proprietor of all, has given us to use for Food, as freely as the *green Herb*. Gen. ix. 2, 3.

He allows the eating them, therefore the mere catching them is no Barbarity. Besides God seems to have carv'd out the Globe on purpose for a universal Supply : In Seas, near Shores, are Banks and Beds made for them ; to furnish the Lands adjacent and Lands which lye remote, are more divided into Lakes and Ponds, Brooks and Rivers ; and he has implanted in several Sorts of Fish, a strong Instinct [or Inclination] to swim up these Rivers a vast Distance from the Sea. And is it not remarkable, that Rivers most in-

cumbered with Falls, are ever more full of Fish than others. Why are they directed here? Why retarded by these difficult Passages? But to supply the Islands? Does forming and disposing of these Things argue nothing?

Since the Flood the Earth is more Barren, and Vegetables afford not a sufficient Support for Mankind. So that if the Lives of all these are of less Consequence, nay, are freely given by him whose they are, they may be taken and used as Food: If they *may* be taken, any may make a Business of taking them for the Supply of others.

But if this be innocent as Business, some may still scruple it as Diversion.

And why not all Diversion with as good Reason? The grave and judicious Mr. *Perkins* says,* “ We are allowed to use the Creatures “ of God, not only for our Necessity, but for meet and convenient De- “ light. This is a confessed Truth. And therefore to them who shall “ condemn fit and convenient Recreation (as some of the ancient Fathers have done, by name *Chrysostom* and *Ambrose*) it may be said, “ be not too righteous, be not too wise, *Eccl.* vii, 16.” But if we consider, that the End of Business and Diversion are the same, we shall clearly conceive the Truth. The End of both are Refreshment and Support of Man in the Service of God. If I may eat them for Refreshment, I may as well catch them, if this recreate and refresh me. It’s as lawful to delight the Eye, as the Palate. All Pleasure arises from the Suitableness and Agreeableness between the perceptive Faculties, and the objects that affect them: And our bountiful Maker, as he has given the animal Life many perceptive Faculties, the Senses of Seeing, Hearing, Tasting, &c., so he has provided suitable Objects for all these Faculties, and does allow us to gratify ourselves therewith.

When the Body has been long wearied with Labour, or the Mind weakened with Devotion, it’s requisite to give them Ease; then the use of innocent and moderate Pleasures and Recreations is both useful and necessary, to Soul and Body; it enlivens Nature, recruits our Spirits, and renders us more able to fet about serious Business and Employment. For to intermix no Gratifications, nor Diversions with our more serious affairs, makes the Mind unactive, dull and useless.†

* See his *Works*, Vol. 2, p. 140.

† Cito rumpes arcum si tensum habueris.
 At si laxaris, cum voles, eris utilis,
 Sic lusus Animo debet aliquando dari,
 Ad cogitandum melior, ut redeat tibi.
 Study and ease
 Together mixt; Sweet Recreation,
 And Innocence, which most does please,
 with Meditation.

* “ It proceeds either from Pride, ill Nature or Hypocrisy, when “ People censure and are offended at the Liberties which others “ use in thus relaxing their Minds. Sloth and Idleness we have already inveigh’d against, and condemn’d, but those who give seasonable Hours for their Devotions and know how to dispatch the proper Business of Life well and seasonably enough, and still aim chiefly at the Glory of God, need be under no Apprehensions of the divine Wrath and Displeasure on the Score of their Diversions. For this is *good and comely*, Eccl. v. 18. And indeed, the Comforts and Enjoyments of this Life, which we receive from the bountiful Hand of God, is a great Subject of our Praise and Thanksgiving to God, . . . *that the lines are fallen to us in pleasant Places, . . . our heads anointed, our Cup running over.* The Streams lead us up to the Fountain and Spring-Head. Our Diversion, if rightly used, not only fits us for, but leads us to Devotion ; and the Creature brings us to Christ. Thus in the Context, the Disciples go a Fishing, and Christ manifests himself to them. . . . Not only countenances them, by succeeding their Design ; but excites and draws out their Affections to him, so much that *Simon* could not wait till the Vessel came to Shore, but leapt into the Lake, and swam swift ashore, to greet and converse with his dearest Lord.

. . . . That I may not be tedious, I will only lead in your Reflections a Word or two.

Religion is the highest reason, and Christianity perfectly suited to Man in his present State. And as the venerable Judge *Hale* says,† “ Religion is best in its *Simplicity* and *Purity*, but difficult to be re- “ tain’d so, without Superstitions and Accessions ; and those do com- “ monly in Time *stifle* and *choak* the *Simplicity* of Religion, unless “ much Care and Circumspection be used : The Contemporations “ are so many and so cumbersome, that Religion looseth its *Nature*, “ or is strangled by them : Just like a Man that hath some excellent “ simple Cordial or Spirit, and puts Musk in it to make it smell “ sweet, and Honey to make it taste pleasant, and it may be *Can- “ tharides* to make it look glorious. Indeed by the Infusions he hath “ given it a very fine *Taste, Smell, and Colour*, but yet he hath so

* The Pharisees were of this Temper and frequently censure and condemn CHRIST for his Recreations, both for the Matter and Manner. *The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners.* Math. 11, 19. Luke 7, 34, &c. and Chap. 15. 2. But all extreams are bad, one leads to another ; those who in this Case *Strain at a Gnat*, in another will generally *Swallow a Camel*.

† Contemplations, last Part, p. 254.

“clogg’d it, and *sophisticated* it with *Superaddition*, that it may be it “hath altered the Nature, and destroy’d the Vertue of it.” Some so muffle up Christianity, and make it look so melancholy, sickly and sower, that inconsiderate People are apt to dread its Command, as they would the Tyranny of *Sallee-Men*. But

What prodigious Injustice is hereby done to the most sacred and excellent Cause in the World?

Such zealous, weak, mistaken Men can’t easily be perswaded of the Dissimilitude there is between *their* Opinion and Practice, and the Doctrine and Behaviour of *Christ* and *his Apostles*. It were worthy of their diligent Application, to make a critical Attempt of running the Parralel. And they would certainly find their own Lives awkward and disjointed ; and their Notions, in this Part, maim’d and defective, and bloated and swell’d in that. They would find likewise, that they have given themselves and others a great deal of unnecessary Fatigue and Perplexity : Wearying themselves and tormenting others, by making those Things Duties which God never requir’d, and forbidding those Things which God never prohibited : Perplexing themselves and all around them with infinite Doubts and Fears, without any Foundation : Leading Men into the most loosing Labyrinths, for which there can be no Clue found, but in the Tracts of their own maz’d Brain.

Therefore, How needful is it that we be well acquainted with the Scriptures, inform’d in the Religion of Jesus, conform’d to the Example of Christ and his Apostles ? There we shall see the Nature and Design of Christianity. To bring *Glory to God in the highest, Peace and Good-will to Men*. That God’s Glory and his Good his Duty and Interest . . . Piety and Pleasure, can never be sundered.

He will find that in order to an Action’s being term’d really religious, the Principle from which, and the End for which it was done, are much more to be considered, than whether it commonly fall under the Denomination of Devotion, Business, or Diversion ; for they are all at one Time or other our Duty : And the doing our Duty from a good Principle and for a right End, must be term’d religious acting. Eating and Drinking are natural and sensible Actions, but when *we eat and drink* to the *Glory of God*, they are to be considered religious, I *Cor. v. 31.* and that not only when Men eat and drink the meanest for Quality, and the least for Quantity that can support them in the service of God and Society ; and when they have a rich and plentiful collation : As at *Cana of Galilee*, they had a Plenty of rich Wines miraculously provided by Christ himself, who made one of the Company at this cheerful Entertainment. This was at a Wedding, which is not every Day. “No Man should make Sports his Business, nor “Pastimes his Employment, no more than Cordials his Drink, or “Sauces his Meat.” This destroys the very Notion of Diversion.

Says Mr. *Lock*, "Some may be said never to divert themselves, they can't *turn aside from Business*, for they never do any." *To every Thing there is a Season*, Eccl. iii. 1 . . . 4.

Should we not always in every Enterprize wish for the Preference and Blessing of Christ? Methinks those who love and adore the blessed Jesus, should desire to see him every where, and in every Thing! who calls for our Devotion and allows our Diversion! who procured Peace and Pleasure for wretched sinful Men! Don't I owe a *grateful Sense* of the Grace and Favor of my Benefactor, in the Enjoyment of every Blessing? This gives a Gust to every Enjoyment, our tasting the Sweetness of Christ in them. We consider him as Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, and when we see every Thing convey'd from God to us by him, then we have a real Relish for them. There is no suitable solid Satisfaction in any temporal Good, but as the Gift of God thro' Christ. This every good Man, in a good Frame finds and feels. "Business and Diversions, "Cities and Palaces, with their various Ornaments; Fields and "Groves; Spring, Summer, and Autumn, with all their flowery "Beauties and tasteful Blessings, are some of the Delights of the "Sons of Men. Books and Learning, and polite Company, and refin'd Science, are the more elegant Joys of ingenious Spirits: These "are enticing Gratifications of the Senses or the Mind of Man; they "are innocent in themselves, they may be sanctified to divine Purposes, and afford double Satisfaction if God be among them: But "if God be absent, if he hide his Face or frown upon the Soul, not "Palaces, nor Groves, nor Fields, nor Business, nor Diversion, nor "all the flowery or tasteful Blessings of Spring or Summer, nor the "more refin'd Joys of Books and Learning, and elegant Company; "not all the rich Provision of Nature and Art, can entertain and refresh, can satisfy or please the Soul of a Christian. "when smitten with the Love of God.

To conclude, Let us ever remember that *we* and *all we have*, is God's, and that we are accountable to him for our Improvement of all, and depend on Christ for our Acceptance with him in all.

A M E N .

Ye happy Fields, unknown to Noise and Strife,
 The kind Rewarders of Industrious Life;
 Ye shady Wood where once I us'd to rove,
 To think for Men, and praise the GOD above;
 Ye murmuring Streams that in Meanders roll,
 The sweet Composers of the pensive Soul,
 Farewell. . . . The City calls me from your Bowers;
 Farewell amusing Tho'ts and peaceful Hours.

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